

SIMAR / HORSES WHILE
CROSSING THE RIVER

DRAWER

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QUOTATIONS

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Abraham Lincoln Quotations & Sayings

“Swap Horses When
Crossing Streams”

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

THE opening paragraph of Lord Wolseley's last article on the Civil War in America, in the *North American Review* for December, contains the following:

By the end of June, 1864, it is not surprising that much pressure was brought to bear upon President Lincoln to remove Grant, and, somewhat later, to stop Gen. Sherman's southward movement. It was then that Mr. Lincoln's historic phrase, that he would not "swop horses whilst crossing a stream," settled the policy of the Federal Government. It decided the fate of the war.

It will be news to most people in this country that there was any pressure brought to bear upon Mr. Lincoln for the removal of Grant and the stoppage of Sherman in June, 1864. Mr. Lincoln's historic phrase about "swapping horses" was never applied to Grant or Sherman, or to their movements. It was used by Mr. Lincoln to explain, in his homely way, his own renomination by the Baltimore Convention. *G.D. 41.12.2.85*

Feb 12, 1940
Ill State Register

tributes to Abraham Lincoln and General James A. Farley, Alf M. Landon and Rev. Oswald W. B. McCall; the military pilgrimages to the tomb of Lincoln, and several other beautiful ceremonies which found their climax in the dedication by Mr. Farley today of the re-established post office at New Salem, have written an epic in the history of this Shrine of Liberty.

The Postmaster General touched the very nerve center of the lofty idealism of this 48 hours of celebration of the anniversary of the birth of Mr. Lincoln when he said today in that quaint setting near Petersburg:

"The primary purpose in replacing New Salem on the postal map is not commercial. The idea is not to enhance the revenues of Uncle Sam. Rather, it is a loftier motive. It is a wish to aid in rekindling the interest of the Nation in New Salem."

This ideal was beautifully amplified when the Postmaster General added that "In the years that lie ahead I hope that millions of Americans will obey the impulse to visit this hallowed shrine, to walk the bypaths that Lincoln trod, to view for themselves the frontier village in which a great human being lived and loved and labored. . . . The fortunate people who come here will carry away more than a sense of historical association. They will realize again the sublime truth that human greatness is not born in success or material wealth, but in the hidden recesses of the soul of man."

This fits beautifully into the idealism so well expressed by Dr. McCall at that great meeting last night. He stressed a vital point which has been emphasized so much in these columns—the development of dreams upon which realization is always based. He said: "So long as we can share and serve Lincoln's DREAM of a land 'dedicated to the proposition' that human rights are to be defended and fulfilled, he will live with eyes burning and with voice commanding us—President forever."

Inspirational, indeed, is this drama—a great Democrat, a great Republican, a great Divine, veterans of several wars, blacks and whites—participating in a great Lincoln Day celebration to be concluded with a series of banquets tonight at one of which the great journalist, William Allen White, of Emporia, Kansas, is to be principal speaker.

Tremendous is the significance of these great outpourings of people such as that last night, rededicating themselves to a high idealism, reconsecrating themselves to the cause of peace, and making Springfield the focal point of the Nation as a living, throbbing symbol of the basic fundamentals of our democracy, for the preservation of which Mr. Lincoln lived and served and died, only to live on, as Dr. McCall said, "President forever."

YESTERDAY AND TODAY

When Abraham Lincoln left Springfield to go to Washington and assume the Presidency of the United States, Springfield was a little town of 9,000 inhabitants and its unpaved streets were almost impassable in bad weather.

They must have been particularly bad when Henry Villard, a correspondent of a New York newspaper arrived to prepare word-pictures of the President-elect, for he stressed these facts in one of his early articles, which were recently reproduced in the Saturday Evening Post. He also noted by comparison that Springfield had very poor hotel accommodations. The majority of the people were

(West Plains, Mo.)
Two swap: An electric fan, two swimming suits, male and female, an assortment of fly swatters and an ice cream freezer, for red flannels, overshoes, cord wood or coal.

A DECADENT AGE

(Buffalo Evening News)

"What has become of the father who used a razor strop on his kids in the woodshed?" Editorial. Alas! he has no woodshed or razor strop—or kids.

HOW IT STARTED

"SWAPPING HORSES IN MID-STREAM"

Long a part of our common speech, this homely metaphor was endowed with endless life and vitality when it fell from the inspired lips of Abraham Lincoln.

The modesty and humility of the words, considering the circumstances in which they were uttered, are so characteristic of the Great Emancipator that, in themselves, they etch for posterity a phase of his remarkable career.

It was upon being congratulated by a delegation from the National Union League, on his renomination for the office of President of the United States, on June 9, 1864, that Lincoln said:

"I am reminded of the story of an old Dutch farmer who remarked that it was not best to swap horses when crossing a stream. I do not allow myself to suppose that either the convention or the League has concluded that I am either the greatest or the best man in America, but rather they have concluded it is not best to swap horses while crossing the river, and have further concluded that I am not so poor a horse that they might not make a botch of it in trying to swap."

EVERYBODY'S QUIZ

COLLEGE

HISTORY, First Year: 1—Who said: "All that I am and all that I hope to be I owe to my mother."

GEOGRAPHY, Second Year: 2—Where is Lake Windemere?

BOTANY, Third Year: 3—Name two forms of plant life that have no chlorophyll.

ZOOLOGY, Fourth Year: 4—Name an animal that has setae.

HIGH SCHOOL

ENGLISH, First Year: 5—What is the leaf of a fern called?

AGRICULTURE, Second Year: 6—About how much flour will a bushel of wheat make?

GEOGRAPHY, Third Year: 7—What is the territorial flora emblem of Alaska?

HISTORY, Fourth Year: 8—What president of the United States lived to be 90 years old?

ELEMENTARY

SPELLING, Second Grade: 9—What three letters can be added to butter to form the name of an insect?

ARITHMETIC, Fourth Grade: 10—Ted had 21 marbles. He bought a dozen new ones then gave away 6. How many did he have left?

READING, Sixth Grade: 11—In what kind of work do the workers use the warp and the weft?

ENGLISH, Eighth Grade: 12—What does the prefix "anti" mean?

(Answers on Classified Page)

WITH EDGAR A. GUEST

as one of the were on our first cruise with the U. S. Battle Fleet, and who decorated the Skipper with the sobriquet—"Admiral of the Sangamon!" And, we do hope that Mr. White meet Gay C. White while he is here, because they both love the Gay White Way of human kindness and spiritual loveliness!

WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE figured with in a funny episode during our convention in Washington last April! One of the regular annual rituals is for the regiment of 100 more editors to be received at the White House in a body, and to have a free-for-all no-blows-barred, off-the-record conference with the President! Some of those editors, by the way, have about as much love for Roosevelt as my wirehair terrier has for Lake Springfield squirrel! If they can't hit him, they want to run him up a tree. President and the "Sage of Emporia" and his friends! Mr. Roosevelt always extends a special greeting to Mr. White and calls him "Bill!"

On the occasion mentioned I was hit through the lobby of the Mayflower Hotel, having dolled up in a black business suit, paratory to going to the Presidential Conference, and ran head-on into "Bill!" He was adorned as he will be in Springfield at the Lincoln Association banquet in "tux" with "black tie," and with all the fascinating features!

It was my understanding that we were to go to the White House informally! Mr. White's advice! "The boys will be out tonight," he said, meaning "the ship listed a little!"

Upstairs I dashed, struggled from the garb into a "tux" after crawling under for a lost collar button, and reached the White House just in time to join the meeting with the President!

William Allen White was the first I could see wearing a "tux!" He had it with a funny twinkle in his eye.

"Well, two of us are properly dressed tonight, anyway! I thought more of you would make the same mistake!"

WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE is 72 years old! He was 72 Saturday, but he is youthful in buoyancy of spirit and in the countless boy and girl friends, in the body! When the Society of Editors wired a birthday greeting to him when he was a mere child at 70.

"A man is seventy only when he has lived a thousand words and the kind message of a thousand friends have made it be three score years and ten—seems utterly impossible to me to have never passed my spiritual birthday year back into it."

